

I became hearing-disabled in both ears 3 days after my birth in 1952. I therefore have left posterior superior temporal gyrus hypoplasia (LPSTGH), which is caused by a lack of proper development of the connections between my left Auditory Center and my left Speech Center for processing the phonemes of human speech. Although there is nothing wrong with my vocal system at all, I cannot pronounce the phonetic sounds of human speech due to the LPSTGH developmental disability.

I was raised and educated as a SPEAKING hearing-disabled person in France, and I have a Parisian French accent. I moved to the USA in 1973, as I am an American Citizen, and I found that there was no assistance for me to use a telephone with my unclear speech. I was blocked, excluded and deprived of the ability to use my "unclear" speech to talk to anyone on the telephone.

Even after the STS Relay began, I had no knowledge and no ability to use the STS Relay system, because no one at the FCC has made any efforts to fund public information outreach to people like me, or to the many other people with speech disabilities with whom I have met and interacted, or to their family members, co-workers, and friends. No one of my acquaintance has ever heard of STS Relay, and when I tell them that STS Relay exists, they are surprised and extremely shocked that STS Relay has now existed for a long time, without most of the general community being aware of it.

It is NOT ENOUGH to tell the disabled people about STS Relay, and most people, at least 90%, with speech disabilities, still do not know about STS Relay. It is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL for the ENTIRE general community in the United States to be educated about STS Relay, and its services and benefits. It is the only way for persons, such as myself, with speech disabilities, to effectively communicate with the world.

It is also utterly essential for a true expert to be the primary person who develops the communications strategies, approves the public relations materials, and is placed in direct charge of the community outreach efforts. At this time, the one TRUE expert, who holds the Ph.D. degree, as I do, is Bob Segalman, Ph.D. -- a person known to the FCC for many years, but who, apparently because of his own speech disability, has been entirely excluded from the STS Relay system. This is wrong, it is discriminatory against the true expert in this area, and the FCC should not have permitted this to occur. Dr. Segalman has established the Speech Communication Assistance by Telephone, Inc. organization, but the FCC appears to be ignoring the experts, and, instead, "preferring" to work with nondisabled persons -- most of whom have never needed, or will never need, the STS Relay System.

I find this situation to be ludicrous, discriminatory and completely wrong. There is a "free" national telephone service for persons with speech disabilities AND those who need to communicate with them by telephone -- but there is NO effective outreach to these people, and therefore most of them do not know that this "free service" even exists for their benefit, and for the benefit of the nondisabled community to speak to people with speech disabilities.

I just recently learned about STS Relay, and I still cannot use it. There is no connection for me to use STS Relay, because STS Relay is still set up primarily for speech disabled people who can HEAR NORMALLY. Why is that? Why is the FCC depriving ME of Freedom of Speech? All that is necessary is to connect the STS Relay Operator to the Text Relay system, so that I can speak with

my own voice and in my own words, and the Operator can then type back to me what the other person says. It is such a simple, seamless, technological system, but the FCC refuses to mandate this system for ALL of the STS Relay providers, nationwide. I have spoken to several companies -- all of them say that they CAN do it, technologically, but they refuse to do it on a "political" basis, or because the FCC "never ordered us to do it." Well, I tell the FCC right now that I have a voice, I have speech, and my speech disability is one where an STS C.A. can be trained to understand me when I speak. I do not see any reason for the FCC to EXCLUDE ME from the STS Relay system, simply because I need the information about what the other person is saying TYPED back to me instead of being spoken verbally back to me. There are many, many people like me in the USA, and all of us need this system to be in place so we can speak with our own voices and in our own words. The VAST majority of persons with hearing and speech disabilities do not understand "American Sign Language," nor do we wish to use it in our telephone or even interpersonal conversations with nondisabled people.

Speech is what makes us human. People who CAN speak, even less clearly, must be given the full rights to Freedom of Speech. And, most importantly, everyone should be told, through full outreach efforts funded by the FCC, of the existence of STS Relay. The only experts who can provide that outreach, and who must be funded to do so, are Dr. Bob Segalman and the persons affiliated with the Speech Communications Assistance by Telephone, Inc. organization in Sacramento, California.

Best regards,

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